

## **HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL FOR AT RISK CHILDREN'S PROGRAM FUNDING**

1. Any person in the community can identify a child that is at significant risk of unnecessary placement in foster care, youth academy or state mental health facility as a result of unmet needs for mental health treatment services. \*
2. The person who identifies the **child** at-risk calls the local Area MH/DD/SAS Program requesting an assessment of eligibility for At Risk Children's Program funding for services. \*\* A referral form should be available at the referring agency, or through the Area Mental Health Program
3. The Area Mental Health Program will schedule an appointment to assess the child and family's needs. This will occur within 30 days of making the referral. The assessment must be done jointly by the Area MH/DD/SAS Program, the referring party, and the child's family (if at all possible). Other key stakeholders (example: Court Counselor, Teacher, Therapist) are encouraged to participate as well. This is important for accurate and complete information regarding the child's current functioning at home, school and the community, as well as historical information about the child's life that may affect eligibility for At Risk Children's Program funding for services. funds.
4. The assessment for At Risk Children's Program funding eligibility includes a determination that the child is at imminent risk of out of home placement (or is already in out of home placement), completion of the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS), and an assessment of Risk and Protective Factors in the child's life (Resiliency Assessment). The assessment will enable the group to determine eligibility for At-Risk Children's Program funding for services and to identify an appropriate Mental Health diagnosis. This is mandatory for funding eligibility.
5. Results of the eligibility determination may be appealed to the local Community Collaborative. They may be able to help the team gather additional information that will allow for re-consideration of eligibility. If the child is determined to be ineligible for At Risk Children's Program funding for services, the availability of other funding streams and sources of support through the Area MH/DD/SAS Program, and other local agencies, and the community should be explored.
6. If the child is eligible for At-Risk Program funding for services, the Area Mental Health Program will convene a Child and Family Team to develop an initial Service Plan that addresses the child and family's strengths, needs and preferences in treatment. The initial plan can be updated as more information becomes available.

\*\*\*

7. All treatment services delivered utilizing At Risk Children's Program dollars must be authorized by the individual Child and Family Teams. Area MH/DD/SAS Program staff must ensure that At-Risk funded services meet State of North Carolina medical necessity criteria. These criteria can be found at the Area Program, or on the Division's web site. Decisions regarding medical necessity are appealed through Area Mental Health Program channels.

\* This could be anyone who is in contact with the child and family...parents, extended family, neighbors, friends, pastors, coaches, school personnel, primary care doctors or nurses, DSS social workers, Court Counselors, mental health counselors, Area Mental Health Programs or anyone else who sees a child

\*\* There is an Area Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Program that serves every county in the state. If you are unable to locate the number for the local Area MH/DD/SAS Program, please call the Child and Family Services section of the Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services at 919-571-4900. Ask for the number of the At Risk Children's Program in your county.

\*\*\* The Child and Family Team is composed of family members, relatives and persons with a kinship-type connection to the child (neighbor, coach, minister, etc.) who can provide supports, Area MH/DD/SAS Program staff, and representatives of other community agencies (schools, courts, social services, etc.) that can provide needed services to families and children.